

under the patronage and control of the State; but the General Assembly shall provide by general laws for the chartering, organization, and powers of all corporations, and for the amending, extending, and forfeiture of all charters, except those above permitted by special act. All such general acts may be altered from time to time or repealed. The General Assembly may at any time by special act repeal the charter of any corporation.

Sec. 2. *Corporations defined.* The term "corporation" as used in this Section shall be construed to include all associations and joint-stock companies having any of the powers and privileges of corporations not possessed by individuals or partnerships. All corporations shall have the right to sue and shall be subject to be sued in all courts, in like cases as natural persons.

ARTICLE IX

EDUCATION

Section 1. *Education encouraged.* Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools, libraries, and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.

Sec. 2. *Uniform system of schools.*

(1) *General and uniform system; term.* The General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools, which shall be maintained at least nine months in every year, and wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students.

(2) *Local responsibility.* The General Assembly may assign to units of local government such responsibility for the financial support of the free public schools as it may deem appropriate. The governing boards of units of local government with financial responsibility for public education may use local revenues to add to or supplement any public school or post-secondary school program.

Sec. 3. *School attendance.* The General Assembly shall provide that every child of appropriate age and of sufficient mental and physical ability shall attend the public schools, unless educated by other means.

Sec. 4. *State Board of Education.*

(1) *Board.* The State Board of Education shall consist of the Lieutenant Governor, the Treasurer, and eleven members appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly in joint session. The General Assembly shall divide the State into eight educational districts. Of the appointive members of the Board, one shall be appointed from each of the eight educational districts and three shall be appointed from the State at large. Appointments shall be for overlapping terms of eight years. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be made by the Governor for the unexpired terms and shall not be subject to confirmation.

(2) *Superintendent of Public Instruction.* The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall be the secretary and chief administrative officer of the State Board of Education.

Sec. 5. *Powers and duties of Board.* The State Board of Education shall supervise and administer the free public school system and the educational funds provided for its support, except the funds mentioned in Section 7 of this Article,